

East European Press Struggling To Emerge

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Presstime

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CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Your views are essential on key future issues

This is a good time to report on some very thoughtful work recently completed by your ANPA Board of Directors. During our January board meeting, we devoted two out of three days to thinking about the future.

The result was identification of the "key issues" confronting our industry and Association in the 1991-93 time frame.

Strategic planning, though not an exact science, is an essential ingredient of leadership. The only dependable way to upgrade results is to anticipate and understand the future. Crystal ball gazing helps.

Initial deliberations were wide-ranging, candid and at times contentious. We laid the cards—both high and low—on the table, arriving finally at consensus on the "critical few" issues, distinguished from a larger array of "merely important" concerns.

These "key issues" underlie strategies and action plans the Association and its standing committees will pursue in coming years:

- *The need to increase market penetration and reach varied demographic segments.* Here your directors have in mind our obvious need in almost every community to increase both readership and circulation. Literacy and education play a part along with pursuit of editorial excellence, better distribution, customer service and more.

- *The need to achieve fair treatment from government at all levels.* Specific targets among others include postal rates and service, the diversity principle, recycling, news access and the cause of a free press.

- *The need to meet the challenge of new competitive technology by developing newspapers as gateways to all information, thereby expanding our audience and market share.* New telecommunications technologies will provide opportunities for us to maximize use of newspaper databases.

- *The need for ANPA to develop cost-effective, coordinated and innovative programs for the industry.* We asked whether our industry can be organized better to get more bang and less bureaucracy for the buck.

- *The need to exploit technology to develop ways to control costs and improve quality.* Ongoing research at The Newspaper Center, systematically planned, will continue to enhance our value and efficiency.

- *The need to assist the industry in developing diverse human resources to be more effective in a competitive environment.* It's people who ultimately provide the key to success.

More detail later. In the meantime your directors, President Jerry Friedheim and I would welcome your thoughts on those key issues you believe we must address successfully together.



William H. Cowles 3rd

Bill Cowles

William H. Cowles 3rd
 ANPA Chairman



FREEDOM REFRESHES EASTERN

BY RONALD KOVEN

The newspaper kiosks open at 6 a.m. in Prague. By 6:30 all the new Czechoslovakian publications created since the Communists were turned out of power are sold out. The big Communist Party organ, *Rude Pravo*, with 1 million circulation, does not sell out until noon.

There is intense interest in the brave new media that speak with new voices, many of which are still running on the revolutionary élan that comes from their origins as underground, or "samizdat," publications. "There were always lots of different papers," says a cab driver. "But there was no point in buying more than one; they all said exactly the same thing. Now, even the old party papers say different things from each other."

But there is persistence of control by the old media structures throughout Eastern Europe. The new newspapers are hamstrung by the small newsprint quotas they get from the state paper monopolies, still controlled by the old party people: The new media can't get enough newsprint; the old ones get as much or more than they need.

A just-completed survey tour of emerging new media in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary encountered many independent-minded journalists who are complaining bitterly. They say the new governments' policies of power-sharing, consensus with the old Communist establishments—the *Nomenklatura*—and "no witchhunts" means that no matter what new labels the old ruling parties now adopt, the establishments are still largely in control in and around the press.

There have been sacrificial lambs and new looks. But even some of the new media

represent mutations of the old Communist establishments.

The media that are the most desirable from a free-press standpoint—new, independent news outlets untied to the new or the old parties—may well have the most difficulty making a go of it. Given bad economic conditions throughout the region, a paper that is not backed by a major institution capable of absorbing big deficits—party, government, church or labor movement—has two strikes against it.

Advertising markets are very narrow and poorly organized. Ad rates are low. Family budgets are very tight, and the extremely low cover prices of publications are close to the limit of what the market will bear.

From country to country, things are very much in flux. What is true today may no longer be so next week, next month or next year. Each country is a special case.

Summaries of the situations of the new media in the countries visited follow. Romania and Bulgaria were not included because their political pictures seem too uncertain to gauge in what context the press will be operating.

EAST GERMANY. It is still very early, historically speaking, since the opening of the Berlin Wall on Nov. 10. But it is already clear that East Germany is the most special case of all because of its close ties to West Germany with its highly developed, commercially aggressive free press. In the main, the prospect is that the German media of the West will help—or absorb—the German media of the East.

Evidently concerned about being swallowed whole, East Germany is preparing a new press law stipulating that the head of any new press company must be both an East German citizen and resident.

The first reflex of the West German press will simply be to expand circulation into East Germany. Asked what plans they had to help the press in East Berlin, managers at West Berlin's independent daily *Tagesspiegel* (circulation 140,000) say that their paper was circulated throughout the city before the Berlin Blockade of 1948, and that they plan to resume city-wide distribution as soon as barriers such as prohibitive postal rates are lifted. Already, they say, the paper's circulation has increased by 10,000 copies daily since November—just from East Berliners crossing to the West and taking the paper back home.

When the West German weekly magazine *Stern* arranged free distribution of a special issue about the first free East German elections coming up March 18, East Berlin's normally sparse car flows turned into a major traffic jam as people streamed in from outlying towns for copies.

The Hamburg newsweekly *Der Spiegel* has set up its own distribution system with copies selling at a deliberately low price of 3 East German Marks (about 60 cents U.S.). The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the great West German daily, ran a house ad thanking the readers who had bought 2,258 subscriptions for East Germans.

Another emerging pattern is joint ventures between the two Germanys. In Leipzig, East Germany's second-largest city and center of the church-protected New Forum movement that overthrew the old regime, construction engineer Pedro Feller made a 50-50 deal with Mathias Fink, a West German publisher from near Hanover, to put out an independent commercial daily, *Wir in Leipzig* (We in Leipzig). It has the editorial staff operating in the East and the printing plant in the West. Billed as "the first German-German



East Berlin paper produces an extra edition.

Koven, a former foreign correspondent and foreign editor for *The Washington Post*, is the Paris correspondent of *The Boston Globe* and the Paris-based representative of the World Press Freedom Committee. This report, commissioned by *presstime*, is based on his recent two-week inspection tour of Eastern Europe on behalf of six press-freedom groups that jointly established an East Europe Press Aid Project.

BUT DOESN'T SOLVE ALL PROBLEMS FOR THE EUROPEAN PRESS

newspaper," it distributed 180,000 copies to all of the city's mailboxes of a first, free promotional issue on Jan. 26. It is projected to go to daily circulation of 60,000 in April after a break-in run as a weekly. The paper will carry ads from both Germanys.

By December, Feller says, he hopes to set up a new, modern printing plant in Leipzig.

This would probably drive out of business the old-line Leipzig printing press that belonged to the Communist Party until January, when party leaders agreed to "give it back to the people," meaning the state.

A nostalgia-laden tour of the only newspaper printing plant in Leipzig, with its 18 Soviet-made hot-metal typesetting machines and long rows of handset typeboxes for headlines, included wry comments from East German printers, such as "Welcome to our museum" or "Gutenberg could come here now and go to work immediately without any hesitation over what to do." Throughout Eastern Europe, newspaper executives joke similarly about wanting to emerge from "the Age of Lead."

Combining the joint-venture approach with the old German tradition of associating newspaper and book publishing, the New Forum Movement in Leipzig is planning to finance the early days of its new weekly, DAZ (for Die Andere Zeitung, or The Other Newspaper), in a co-publishing deal with the giant West German book publisher Bertelsmann. They will jointly produce a commemorative volume *Jetzt Oder Nie, Demokratie*—the rhyming chant of the Leipzig movement, "Democracy, Now or Never." The book will include photos and text about the autumn "peace prayer" demonstrations in which the New Forum movement called for press freedom, among other things, and ultimately toppled the old regime.

Despite its innovative approach, DAZ seems bound to bump up against severe constraints still imposed by the system in East Germany. The clever young students behind the enterprise, after procuring from West Germany an apartment full of word processors, had to apply to the state paper



Staff of Die Andere lay out the weekly's first issue in an East Berlin apartment. The new paper is published by the New Forum opposition movement in East Germany.



Gazeta Wyborcza Editor Adam Michnik, a Solidarity member of the Polish Parliament, dictates his commentary because he does not know how to use the word processor.

Photos by Ronald Koven

monopoly and were granted only 189 metric tons of newsprint for this year—enough for just 40,000 copies weekly.

And despite the willingness to embrace West German capitalist ways, the East Germans are also quick to relapse into welfare-state journalism. DAZ Editor Jan Peter recounts how his paper obtained its offices in a slummy ground-floor apartment next to a railroad siding: "We threatened the mayor that we would stage a sit-in at his office in city hall until he found us space for the paper."

The old party press is also changing, at least outwardly. In Erfurt, at the Thueringer Allgemeine, the staff voted to dismiss its editor-in-chief. The editor of New Forum's weekly in East Berlin, Dieter Krause, says he found this "very suspicious. Except for the editor, it's all the same old people, and now they're trying to hang on."

Communist revolutionary titles of the dailies in the 14 East German regional capitals have been changed back to normal-sounding newspaper names. So, Volkswacht (The People's Guardian) in Gera has become the Ostthueringer Nachrichten (East Thueringer News); Neuer Tag (New Day) in Frankfurt-on-the-Oder is now the Neue Oder Zeitung (New Oder Newspaper).

One of the few papers to keep such old titles is the prestigious Leipziger Volkszeitung (Leipzig People's Newspaper, circulation 240,000), an old Socialist Party paper from before World War I. The now-renewed East German Socialist Party, which turned over all its properties when it was forced into a shotgun wedding with the Communists in 1946, is reclaiming what it put into the common pot, including its newspapers.

But an argument has been raging among the East German Socialists over whether there should be a general-circulation party press.

Early plans for the party to found a major weekly were abandoned, according to party spokesman Stefan Reichl. "The mass media must be independent, not a party press," he says. Once the party gets its old papers back, Reichl vows, it will free them of any party affiliation. The Socialists would then confine themselves to creating a weekly house organ for their membership.

As for the rest of the print media, he predicts, "People will be buying and subscribing to the West German press. The East



Journalism students from Charles University sell their new Studentske Listy newspaper in Wenceslas Square.

and West German press will work together. There will be pan-German papers, plus an independent local press."

Yet, Uwe Mueller, president of the Leipzig Socialist Party and a journalist who has started a one-man Socialist news agency exchanging news of European Social Democrats, makes it clear that he can't wait to get his hands on the Leipziger Volkszeitung. Requiring him to let go if and when it reverts to the local Socialists may be easier said than done.

POLAND. The situation of the Polish press is clearly the most catastrophic, with the possible exception of conditions reported from Romania. Some radical rethinking seems needed if a truly independent press is to come into being and survive in Poland. Otherwise, the Polish press will be reduced to papers kept alive because they are the official or semi-official organs of the government, the *Nomenklatura*, Solidarity or the church.

Many Polish journalists have been jolted by recent events into the realization that trading the Communists for Solidarity as journalistic masters could prove a poor bargain. But few of those same journalists have taken the next step—to convince themselves that they need to operate new papers as commercial enterprises so they can stand on their own.

The overriding problem of the press in

Poland, the largest country in the region (see chart), is the cost of newsprint. Subsidized prices ended Jan. 1 with the freeing of the paper market. The cost jumped threefold, almost overnight, to world levels. Actually, over a six-month period, prices skyrocketed by a factor of 24.

Nobody can cite a single example of a publication that is not seriously in the red—including the old, established Communist and church papers, although they are insulated by large paper stocks. The Solidarity daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* has cut its print run from 550,000 to 400,000 to save paper.

Price rationing has replaced the stranglehold quota system of the old state monopoly on newsprint and other paper. The expectation is of a cascade of bankruptcies, starting immediately, and of a doubling—to 20 percent—of unemployment among Polish journalists.

Whether economic conditions allow for their success or not, the largest number of new

media projects in all stages of development is undoubtedly concentrated in Poland. When he spoke in Washington, D.C., in early December, Stefan Bratkowski, president of the independent Polish Journalists Association, said he hoped there would be 500 small local papers created in the country [presstime, Jan. 1990, p. 49]. By late January his count was more than 600.

A pile of sample papers he had received in a single week included a moving array of small village sheets, ranging from weekly to whenever, that were mimeographed, photocopied, letterpress or even serigraphed—the classic technique of the Polish underground press. (There is reckoned to have been 1,200 underground titles over the seven years of martial law in Poland, and 3.5-million Poles were regularly reading them at its height.)

Bratkowski's pile also included the first independent regional daily, published in Bialystok near the northeast frontier with the Soviet Union. Complete with advertising, it is a tabloid obviously modeled on *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Electoral Gazette), the daily close to Solidarity that is credited, even by its numerous journalistic critics, with having created the breakthrough for press freedom in Poland in May 1989.

A number of newspaper projects, some very ambitious, are planned for national dailies and major regionals in Wroclaw, Poznan, Lodz and Cracow. There have been a number of flirtations with major Western

Ronald Koven

media companies, including Murdoch, Maxwell and Hersant, but no major deals seem to be in the offing, evidently because of the serious economic uncertainties.

Paper and ink alone now account for 70-80 percent of total costs at most papers. At the government paper Rzeczpospolita (Republic, circulation 300,000), the editors say paper and ink form 70 percent of costs; payments to the Communist Party-owned RSW printing and distribution monopoly, 27 percent; and staff, 3 percent. That paper, with a new team of top editors since October, is now regarded as the most serious, informative paper in Poland.

The Polish press world was severely shaken this autumn by the action of Solidarity leader Lech Walesa. Soon after Solidarity formed the government—with Tadeusz Mazowiecki, editor of Tygodnik Solidarnosc (Solidarity Weekly) becoming prime minister—Walesa moved to regain personal control of Tygodnik Solidarnosc. He muscled aside Mazowiecki's successor as editor to name his own person. In the uproar that ensued, half the staff quit or was fired.

Gazeta Wyborcza hired the most notable ones in a show of sympathy with the Solidarity movement's governmental/parliamentary faction.

This upheaval accelerated a growing conviction among Polish journalists of the need to establish truly independent papers. Hence, the revival in late January of the weekly Po Prostu (Simply Speaking), a dissident Communist weekly banned in 1957 for crossing the line to advocate real democracy. Po Prostu's young star columnist, Konstanty Gebert, who dropped his close collaboration with Gazeta Wyborcza, says: "We are now realizing the press needs to be independent from all masters. Besides, Gazeta is . . . an extension of the underground press. . . . It's not just that its coverage is too short and incomplete because it lacks space. It's also that it has its own taboo subjects about the Solidarity government. . . .

"We'll be basically friendly to this democratic government. But the best service we can perform for our friends is to be critical and independent. I think we've already outgrown the phase of militant journalism in this country."

While the first 50,000-copy press run of Po Prostu was a sellout, its relatively high cover price for Poland of 13 cents (U.S.) is not enough to cover costs. The newspa-

Eastern European Countries and Their Press

Bulgaria

Population: 9 million
Newspapers: 17 dailies (7 national)
Journalists: 6,000

Czechoslovakia

Population: 16 million
Newspapers: 30 dailies (8 national)
Journalists: 7,500

German Democratic Republic (East Germany)

Population: 17 million
Newspapers: 24 dailies (8 national, 14 in district capitals)
Journalists: N/A

Hungary

Population: 10.6 million
Newspapers: 30 dailies (6 national)
Journalists: 5,300

Poland

Population: 38 million
Newspapers: 47 dailies (8 national)
Journalists: 10,000

Romania

Population: 23 million
Newspapers: 16 dailies (6 national, 3 in Hungarian, 2 in German)
Journalists: 3,100

per does not plan to carry ads because the editors won't give up any space in the 16-page paper.

Ernest Skalski, a highly respected senior editor at Gazeta, does not basically disagree with Gebert. "Our young journalists," says Skalski, "must learn how to collect and write news. Our papers were propaganda sheets, not sources of information. We have lots of columnists, or people pretending to be columnists, and very few newsmen. Everyone wants to print his opinion; no one wants to work on the news desk."

Conceding that even Trybuna Ludu, the big old Polish Communist Party paper, is more interesting and has picked up circulation now that it is writing against the new government, Skalski says, "It's easier to publish an opposition paper. But it's still the same old people."

Gazeta has almost cornered the market on Western help. Its offices in an old kindergarten in an outlying public housing development are full of word processors. But they are still being used like fancy typewriters, because there is no linkup with photocomposition and none is expected for at least six months, the editors say (even though Gazeta International, an English-language weekly extract of the daily, is experimenting with desktop publishing). Journalists compose on the screens, then print out the copy to be set in lead at RSW. Gazeta has not yet found space to house the second-hand press contributed by the Paris daily Le Monde to allow independence from RSW.

Gazeta is also heavily overstaffed, perhaps by as much as two-thirds—just like the old Communist Party papers but for differ-

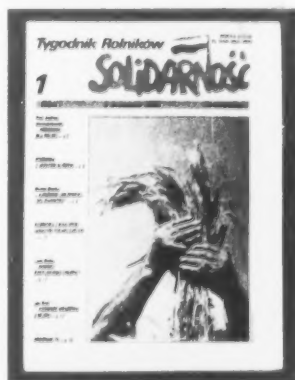
ent reasons. "How do you refuse to hire someone you worked together with in the underground, who went to prison, who is ready to work 24 hours a day without complaining?" asked a sympathetic critic of Gazeta.

Meanwhile, by turning themselves into "private companies" and cooperatives, the old Communist papers are restructuring to outmaneuver any government plans to take them away from the old Communist establishments. "It was a big mistake," says Maciej Ilowiecki, acting president of the independent Polish Journalists Association, "to leave the media in Communist hands. The party is changing its face, manipulating things. . . . About 60 percent of the media is Communist-controlled. All of the local dailies are being run by the *Nomenklatura*. At the TV, the new chief is no longer Communist, and he has a few young, low-level journalists on his side. But the leadership and control layer is still in Communist or secret police hands. . . .

"The West doesn't grasp the dangers of the situation," Ilowiecki continues. "The *Nomenklatura* is beginning to regroup to exploit the weaknesses and disorganization of the democratic forces in and out of the press. The new structures in the media throughout Eastern Europe are not interconnected. The enemies of reform know how to take advantage of this. The old Establishment is ready for a counterrevolution. If they should succeed in the Soviet Union, then we can all just get ready to go back to prison."

To get around the paper problem, some people think the answer for local media is independent local FM radio stations. Bratkowski has proposed creation of 500 such stations. But that is still very far off.

As Slawomir Siwek, editor of Solidarnosc Tygodnik Rolnikow (Solidarity Farmers' Weekly), sums up the situation, "Our paper lives from hand to mouth. Here in Poland we are building capitalism without capital."



Solidarity Farmers' Weekly lives hand to mouth.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA. The new media in Prague, legal only since last autumn, are running on their revolutionary enthusiasm. Accountants with balance sheets seem to be viewed as a new way to enslave the press with a new set of leaden-minded apparatchiks. New publications still think they can finance themselves with fervor alone.

Lidové Noviny (People's News), the newspaper of the Civic Forum movement, the new government party, is the most important new publication. It is now being published twice-weekly with a press run of 380,000 copies—cut back from an initial 500,000 for lack of newsprint.

Scheduled to go daily in April, Lidové Noviny has a serious look to it—not yet any ads, small photos and a front-page cartoon, solid blocks of type.

The original Lidové Noviny was the intellectual prestige paper of the post-World War I Czechoslovak republic, but the Communists closed it down in 1952.

Its run-down offices on Wenceslas Square have a palpable atmosphere of justifiable pride over having led the peaceful revolution from communism. When the paper was the underground monthly of the Charter 77 opposition group, its board of governors included now-President Vaclav Havel, now-Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier and Rita Krimova, the new Czechoslovak ambassador to Washington.

The two top editors, Jiri Ruml and Rudolf Zeman, were jailed in October soon

after they attempted to register the paper officially as an above-ground publication. The campaign to free them was one of the elements that led to the mass demonstrations that toppled the Communist government in late November.

Lidové Noviny is still living in large part on loans and contributions from Sweden, Austria, West Germany, France and the United States, as well as from Czech émigrés. The staff is still trying to figure out what would be the best electronic editing system to install.

Yet some journalists who do not want to be identified with a party hesitate to join Lidové Noviny. Jan Ruml, the 36-year-old son of Lidové Noviny's editor-in-chief and a respected journalist in his own right, refused to join his father's staff. Instead, he decided to run his own irregular publication, Informacni Servis/Sport, the outgrowth of an underground paper.

The younger Ruml says the "sport" referred to is that of baiting the authorities, and he is still testing the outer limits of what is permissible. Asked what his biggest problem is under the new democratic Havel government, he surprisingly says, "Censorship." His paper recently published an article accusing the army of putschist tendencies. His printer, who also prints Czechoslovakia's armed forces publications, told him he had better find another printing house for the next issue, and the interior minister, still a Communist, said he was investigating whether he could prosecute Ruml.

As if to show he backs the younger Ruml against such attempts to muzzle his paper, President Havel made a point of taking him along on his first trip to Warsaw and Budapest.

The paper's 50,000 copies are distributed by students, and there are just three paid staffers plus 15 to 20 volunteers. The only ads the paper carries are free ones for books and plays. "My newspaper," says Ruml, "should be so good that it can live without advertising. Otherwise, we have no right to do it."

He has gotten a lot of modern electronic editing equipment through the Swedish-based Charter 77 Foundation, but he readily admits a need to "professionalize" his staff through foreign internships and English courses.

Irena Gerova is hailed as the most coura-



A once-underground paper (right) has blossomed in Prague.

geous journalist in the old party press for her insistence on covering the November demonstrations going on right outside the windows of her daily, Svobodny Slovo (Free Word), overlooking Wenceslas Square. The official press tried for weeks to ignore the events. As soon as the government was changed, papers like Gerova's began acting more independently.

Nevertheless, with five other independent-minded staffers, she preferred to create a spinoff

political-cultural weekly, Svobodny Zitek (Free Tomorrow), rather than continue to deal with the same compromised editors who insisted she refer to Charter 77 leader Havel as "a Czech playwright"—without ever citing his name.

The parent daily has no paper problems, but the weekly is restricted to a bare break-even 60,000 copies. Staff members are certain they could easily sell 100,000 and make a real profit.

Special pleas are heard in Prague for Westerners not to neglect the counterparts of Lidové Noviny in the capitals of the country's two other federal states—Verejnost in Bratislava, capital of Slovakia, and Moravské Noviny in Brno, capital of Moravia. The continued hold of the old Communists over the official press in those states is said to be even stronger than in Prague.

The newly created independent Syndicat of Journalists is sponsoring the reappearance of the monthly Reporter, a title identified with the short-lived "Prague Spring" uprising of 1968. Its new editor, Miroslav Filip, was also jailed under the previous government.

He has his offices in the same building that houses the Prague headquarters of the old pro-Soviet-line International Organization of Journalists.

The IOJ's continuing presence in Prague is an embarrassment for the new breed of Czech journalists. Zeman of Lidové Noviny, who is president of the new Syndicat, says it poses "delicate" problems, both because the IOJ owns elaborate facilities and because there are more than 50 authoritarian Third World governments that want their journalists' unions to stay in the organization.

It stands discredited among East European journalists, however. The new Polish Journalists Association has joined the rival pro-Western International Federation of



A bust of Josef Stalin in a Czech journalism students' newsroom is mockingly adorned with a green eyeshade and the words "Our Editor-in-Chief."

Ronald Koven

Journalists, which is based in Brussels.

Zeman wonders whether it might be possible for the Czech Syndicat to belong to both federations. Before deciding, he says, he wants to consult with the new independent journalists' groups in Hungary and Poland.

HUNGARY. In Hungary, the transition is furthest along, with a lively, varied media scene in which there are even the first serious attempts to create independent radio-television. Unlike the other countries, where the importance of advertising is only dimly understood, it is so widespread in Hungary that journalists say the public is already rebelling against an overdose, both in print and on state broadcast media.

The big problem in Hungary seems to be how to deal with the shocks and pressures of freedom. Hungarians are quick to compare their situation with the way post-Franco Spain was struggling for an equilibrium point between freedom and license. The concerns expressed are over pornography, libel and defamation, make-it-up-as-you-go-along journalism, preventing opportunists and turncoats of the old regime from dominating the new media scene, and setting up legal defenses against massive foreign takeovers of a still economically vulnerable press.

As in the other countries, however, truly independent private papers are still having trouble dealing with the *Nomenklatura*-controlled distribution monopoly, exercised by the post office. It even runs the newsstands.

Datum, a daily founded in April 1989 that Western diplomats consider the most independent major publication, is having a great deal of trouble making a breakthrough. Editor Ivan Baba says he has a running battle with the post office, which insists it can sell only 10,000 copies daily. He has been managing to sell an equal number on his own but says he needs a full-scale distribution system to break what he sees as the post office's attempt to destroy his paper—even though it gets a 30-percent cut of sales.

Baba says there is no real paper problem in Hungary. Nevertheless, he must buy from a government agency that makes him pay for Western-quality newsprint yet delivers Soviet rolls worth 15 percent less on the world market.

Baba wants to have five regional zoned editions

with local news and to expand his coverage of consumer and financial news of direct interest to readers—something the Hungarian press generally ignores in favor of big-picture economic policy and financial news.

Other independent papers include such general-interest publications as the weeklies Vilag (Words) and Beszelo (Speaker), as well as the satirical biweekly Magyar Narancs (Hungarian Orange) of the Free Democratic Union—the Hungarian movement that successfully challenged the grip of the old Communist Party. All of them are held down to about 30,000 copies each by the same system restricting the expansion of Datum.

The big new success story of the Hungarian press is the lively color tabloid Reform, edited by Peter Toke, which calls itself "An Independent Democratic News Magazine." At 400,000 copies weekly, it has become one of the most important publications in Hungary. Reform was originally owned by a consortium of Hungarian state organs, including a 15-percent participation by the Communist Party. This was watered down through an increase in capital in which Rupert Murdoch bought a 50-percent interest for \$4 million, along with half of the company's new 100,000-circulation afternoon daily Mai Nap (Today).

Robert Maxwell has also bought a 40-percent share of the government-owned daily Magyar Hirlap (Hungarian Newspaper, circulation 100,000). Consummation of the deal initially was held up when Maxwell discovered that the paper lost more than \$400,000 last year.

But the most spectacular foreign takeover that has been in the works involves the formerly Communist Magyar Nemzet (Hungarian Nation, circulation 140,000). Negotiating to buy the paper has been George Soros, a Hungarian-American multimillionaire whose personal foundation spends \$4 million a year for Hungarians to study abroad and for a management training center in Budapest. Soros has been almost single-handedly responsible for preparing the Hungarian elite to operate in a market economy.

The newspaper talks became stalled when he discovered that the paper lost \$500,000 last year, and when the paper's Communist-affiliated owners balked over giving Soros the right to name a new editor. His \$850,000 offer was turned down as too low. Even if that deal should fall through, it is clear that

Soros is on the lookout for newspaper properties as a vehicle for his free-enterprise message to the Old Country.

If any further proof is needed that Hungary is edging toward a Western-style media scene, there is the Hungarian edition of Playboy, printed in Vienna, Austria. It is considered the most sedate of the publications in its category published for Hungarians.

Even so, in the country's 19 district capitals, the local dailies are still in Communist hands.

WHERE HELP IS NEEDED. Throughout Eastern Europe, the first plea (after help with newsprint supplies) is for familiarization courses in use of new electronic editing technology and in English, French and German for young journalists who were obliged to concentrate on Russian as their main foreign language. With some prodding, the top editors all concede that workshops and courses in all aspects of media management are also a desperate need.

Another need at the best universities, starting with Prague's venerable Charles University, is help in revamping curricula of journalism faculties that were specialized not in teaching fact finding but how to write Marxism-Leninism for the masses.

East European journalists seem to be divided between those who want equipment first and those who want skills. Jan Peter, young editor of the New Forum weekly in Leipzig, says, "Computers we can buy. We need training, training and more training." But Dieter Krause, his older counterpart at the New Forum weekly in East Berlin, seems offended by offers of journalism training. Instead, he seeks "everything" in the way of equipment. As it is, says Krause, his 10-member staff is having to make do with two typewriters among them.

There also seems to be a split between those who want to leapfrog right into the most advanced technologies and those who say that hand-me-down but serviceable heavy equipment from the West would be appreciated.

Still another split divides those who seek internships and other long-stay training opportunities in the West and those who would prefer short, intense workshop programs brought to their own cities.

All forms of contacts—anything that gives a renewed feeling of being connected with the outside world—is another insistent demand, including "twinning" of Western papers with similar interests, subscription exchanges, visits, internships and specially commissioned articles.

Good coordination in the West is important to avoid duplication, waste or undue concentration on helping just a few publications. □



Rupert Murdoch owns half of this lively Hungarian tabloid.